



# Eliminating Childhood Lead Poisoning through Strategic Partnerships: Operation Clean House

## WHAT IS THE HEALTH ISSUE?

- Childhood lead poisoning remains a major preventable environmental public health problem in the United States. According to recent Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) data, an estimated 310,000 U.S. children aged one to five years have blood lead levels greater than 10 micrograms per deciliter ( $\mu\text{g}/\text{dL}$ ), a level at which harmful health effects are known to occur.
- Twenty-four million housing units (25 percent of the nation's housing stock) have significant lead-based paint hazards, the primary cause of elevated blood lead levels among young children in the United States.
- Analysis of data from one local lead poisoning prevention program indicated that 79, out of 282,578, homes were responsible for 35 percent of all of the children who had elevated blood lead levels in that community.
- To reach the goal of eliminating childhood lead poisoning by 2010, strategic collaborative projects must be developed and implemented.

## WHAT HAS CDC ACCOMPLISHED?

In 2004, CDC partnered with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in a three-community pilot program to reduce the number of housing units in which multiple children have been lead poisoned. Operation Clean House consists of the following components:

- Identifying housing: CDC is identifying housing units where children have been found to have lead levels  $\geq 10 \mu\text{g}/\text{dL}$  through the Childhood Blood Lead Surveillance (CBLS) System. This system currently collects blood lead data from 43 states, 5 cities, and the District of Columbia.
- Sharing data: CDC, in cooperation with state and local childhood lead poisoning prevention programs, is linking the collected CBLS data to local tax assessor data in the 12 communities to identify the owners and age of these housing units. CDC, in conjunction with HUD and EPA, is developing data sharing procedures to protect confidentiality and improve targeted prevention efforts.
- Creating lead-safe homes: HUD is using these data to target remediation efforts and ensure that federally assisted housing is lead-safe. EPA is using these data to target prevention and education efforts in those housing units that are privately owned.
- Building Partnerships: Operation Clean House will require partnerships to be developed between federal, state, and local agencies, which will result in more-focused efforts to create lead-safe housing and eliminate childhood lead poisoning in the United States.

## WHAT ARE THE NEXT STEPS?

CDC is committed to the Healthy People 2010 goal of eliminating blood lead levels  $\geq 10 \mu\text{g}/\text{dL}$ . CDC continues to assist federal, state, and local agencies with Operation Clean House in the identified communities.